

Environmental Sustainability Policy

Best Practice – Quality Area 3

PURPOSE

To recognise the importance of our role as a community organisation that promotes awareness and action towards caring for the world we leave our children. This policy will provide guidelines to assist our Kindergarten to take an active role in caring for the environment, and promoting and contributing to a sustainable future.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES | AIMS & OBJECTIVES

At Albert Park Pre-School we are committed to environmental sustainability.

Our approach to environmental sustainability is informed by our philosophy that children benefit from a connection to nature and can help lay the foundations for a happy, healthy, sustainable future for all. *(Our Philosophy)*

We understand that people are a part of nature and are not separate to it. Building such understanding into our curriculum and activities supports children as they grow and become active, responsible members of society.

We strive for a fun, enriching learning environment that promotes our view that how we live today should not make it difficult for people to live well in the future.

We aim for our Kindergarten program to reflect the importance of the natural environment for children's growth, development, and future.

At Albert Park Pre-School we are committed to the following aims and objectives:

- To promote environmentally sustainable practices
- To implement strategies for environmental sustainability (refer Attachment 1)
- To value and respect the role of the natural environment in children's learning and development
- To support the City of Port Phillip's Toward Zero Strategy and work in partnership to target reductions in our use of energy and water along with reducing land fill waste (refer Attachment 2)
- To work with our Kindergarten community and local Council towards our goal of becoming energy neutral

We strive to review all processes within the Kindergarten to make them align with these goals.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Albert Park Pre-School.



3. BACKGROUND & LEGISLATION

Background

One of the most significant responsibilities that [early childhood] professionals have is to support children to retain the sense of awe and wonder that they are born with, to add to that a desire to nurture and protect what is beautiful, and to encourage them to appreciate that there are many possibilities for honouring life and wonders that the world holds+ (Stonehouse, A. (2006) NSW Curriculum Framework for Children's Services . refer to Sources).

Current research confirms that experiences in the early years help establish lifelong behaviour and values, and this reinforces the need for sustainability education to be included in early childhood programs. It is important for children to understand their place in the world and the role that they can play in protecting the environment. Children should learn to be environmentally responsible and be empowered to make a difference, and this learning should not wait until the formal education of primary school. Elliot and Davis (refer to Sources) state that early childhood educators have an active and significant role to play ensuring children experience connections with the natural environment in meaningful way which will ultimately promote action for sustainability+.

Environmental education can be defined as learning *about* the environment and how natural systems function; the interconnectedness of plants, animals, humans and the planet we inhabit. Environmental education promotes the growth of knowledge, skills and values about the environment, often with a focus on science and nature. In an early childhood setting, environmental education is integrated into everyday decisions made as part of the curriculum.

Sustainability can be defined in a broader and more holistic context of education *for* the environment. The complexities of social, environmental and economic systems are acknowledged, and their implications for sustaining life are considered. The aim of sustainability education is to promote a sense of responsibility, respect, empowerment, active participation, enquiry and a desire for social change (adapted from ECA Environmental Sustainability Policy 2005). The goal of sustainability education is to empower children and adults to think and act in ways that meet their immediate needs without jeopardising the potential of future generations to meet *their* own needs. Sustainable practice in early childhood settings requires a holistic approach that integrates all aspects of sustainability into service operations.

The *National Quality Standard* (Quality Area 3: Physical Environment) includes a discussion on the service taking an active role in caring for its environment and contributing to a sustainable future (Standard 3.3). As service providers to the community, education and care services have an opportunity not only to make reductions to waste, water and energy consumption through their operations, but to role-model sustainable living to young children in a world facing climate change, increasing levels of air, land and water pollution, and depleted natural resources.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment*
 - Standard 3.3: The service takes an active role in caring for its environment and contributes to a sustainable future
 - Element 3.3.1: Sustainable practices are embedded in service operations
 - Element 3.3.2: Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment



4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Environmental sustainability: The responsible use and management of the planet's resources to ensure that they remain available and uncompromised for future generations to use and enjoy.

5. SOURCES

- *Seedlings Project* <https://www.facebook.com/SeedlingsEYEFS>
- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:* <http://education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework#key%20documents>
- Davis, J. M. and Elliott, S. (2004) Mud pies and daisy chains: Connecting young children and nature. In *Every Child*, 10(4) p4. Available at: http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/pdf/every_child/ec0404_mudpies.pdf
- Early Childhood Australia: http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/resource_themes/
- *'Educators' Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:* <http://docs.education.gov.au/documents/educators-guide-early-years-learning-framework-australia>
- Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC): <http://www.eeec.org.au/index.php>
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard, ACECQA:* www.acecqa.gov.au
- Hughes, M. (2007) *Climbing the little green steps: How to promote sustainability within early childhood services in your local area*, Gosford and Wyong Council: <http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/what-we-offer/regulation-and-accreditation/early-childhood-education-care/useful-links-and-resources/sustainability-resources>
- Stonehouse, A. (2006) *NSW Curriculum Framework for Children's Services:* http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswr/assets/main/documents/childcare_framework.pdf
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework:* www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/eyldf/default.htm
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework . Resources for Professionals:* www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/eyldf/profresources.htm

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- collaborating with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, parents/guardians, children and others at the service to identify environmental sustainability strategies for implementation (refer to Attachment 1 . Strategies for environmental sustainability)
- allocating the necessary resources to implement the identified environmental sustainability strategies at the service
- ensuring all staff are aware of their responsibilities under this *Environmental Sustainability Policy*
- ensuring the identified strategies (refer to Attachment 1 . Strategies for Environmental Sustainability) are implemented at the service
- seeking and applying for grants, where appropriate, to support the implementation of strategies within this policy
- ensuring parents/guardians are aware of, and have access to, the *Environmental Sustainability Policy*.



Staff are responsible for:

- collaborating with the Approved Provider, parents/guardians, children and others at the service to identify environmental sustainability strategies for implementation at the service (refer to Attachment 1 . Strategies for environmental sustainability)
- implementing identified strategies for which they have responsibility at the service (refer to Attachment 1 . Strategies for environmental sustainability)
- engaging in activities that support the service to become more environmentally sustainable (e.g. recycling)
- role modelling sustainable practices to children and families
- incorporating environmental education and sustainable practices within the curriculum
- planning opportunities for children to connect with nature and the natural world at the service, including on excursions and at other service events
- incorporating celebrations of environmental awareness into the program e.g. National Tree Day, National Recycling Week, Clean Up Australia Day and Walk to Work Day
- visiting other services known for their exemplary sustainability practices
- keeping up to date with current research, resources and best practice through professional development, newsletters, journals and support agencies such as Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC).
- ongoing reflection about everyday practices and their impact on the environment
- providing families with information about environmentally sustainable practices e.g. through displays, fact sheets and local community resources, and by ensuring that families have access to the *Environmental Sustainability Policy*

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- collaborating with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, children and others at the service to identify environmental sustainability strategies for implementation at the service (refer to Attachment 1 . Strategies for environmental sustainability)
- following the strategies identified and outlined in this *Environmental Sustainability Policy*

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider of Albert Park Pre-School will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.



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- Mr Toby Kent and his son, Kabir, who attended our Kindergarten from 2013 . 2014
- Our Sustainability Officer . Camille Lee
- Mr Brett Hedger - Greenhouse Programs Officer . City of Port Phillip Sustainability Department

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Strategies for Environmental Sustainability
- Attachment 2: Port Phillip City Council & Albert Park Pre-School Centre Lease Schedule 3 Further Obligations
- Attachment 3: Port Phillip City Council & Albert Park Pre-School Centre Building Environment Management Plan (BEMP)

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Albert Park Pre-School on 27 April 2015

REVIEW DATE June 2017